

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1992

SPORTS

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STEVE KOWALSKI

Covering football can be scary job

Did you know that... When you combine the names of Redford Catholic Central's starting running backs, Freddie Taylor and Jason Krueger, you get Freddie Krueger. No wonder opposing defenses are having nightmares. I wouldn't want to play the Shamrocks on Halloween night.

Rich Popp, who set passing records as a quarterback at Livonia Franklin (1981-82) and Wayne State (83-86), is in his second year as offensive line coach at Birmingham Brother Rice. I always thought Popp resembled a lionman — with the athleticism of a skilled player. Now he's coaching them and doing a heck of a job.

Livonia Stevenson junior guard Mo Drabicki, easily the best point guard in Overland, did not make the Free Press' top 100 prep season girls basketball list.

Our office received another sarcastic fax last week from Lee Westerhold, a Plymouth Canton parent who thinks we don't give the Chiefs a fair shake in coverage. At last count, we have sent staff writers to cover seven Canton games, which is more than any other school in our coverage area. Westerhold also must have forgot that I went out of my way last month to investigate a story about how a guy who runs a scouting service took \$650 from the Westerholds and did little to promote their daughter as a basketball player.

There are plans to improve the drainage and eventually add more stands to the two-year-old CEP soccer field.

Covering high school football games can be dangerous. Ask our Brad Emons, who had to crawl out of a press box window recently when a fight broke out up there. Brad was trying to be a peacemaker before having to bail out. Uh, he only missed four plays.

The Catholic League girls basketball playoff semifinals, pitting the Central Division against the AD Division, will be at 6 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 4 at Schoolcraft College in Livonia. The finals are 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 8 at University of Detroit's Calhoun Hall.

This could be the first year since 1985 that no schools in Farmington or Plymouth/Canton qualify for the state football playoffs.

The night Redford Union football coach Shawn McGowan left in the fourth quarter of a 21-0 loss to Woodhaven, he and wife Sheila became the proud parents of a daughter, Caitlin Francis. The baby weighed in at 7 pounds, 8 ounces.

The Overland Relays will be held for a second straight year at RU's Kraft Field, either Saturday, May 1, or Saturday, May 8. RU AD Jim Gibbons wants to know which dates are more favorable for teams. Call 592-3408.

Gibbons is still looking for a head coach and assistant coach for RU boys swimming. Call him at 592-3408.

The head linesman who made a controversial call in the last minute of Redford Thurston's 9-7 loss at Taylor Truman should be given credit. Whether or not the Truman player intercepted the ball is debatable, but the official had to make a call and he did it right away without indecision.

Garden City has a potential Division I college placekicker, Mike Borg.

Jenny Sproul, a 1989 Livonia Churchill graduate, is a senior volleyball player at Central Michigan University and one of the top setters in the Mid-American Conference. Sproul is third in the MAC in setting assists (10.6 per match) and second in service aces (4.3 per match) for the Chippewas, who are 13-6 overall and 5-4 in the MAC.

Pete Mazzoni, a 1987 Stevenson graduate who played football and baseball at Adrian College, had a recent professional hockey tryout with the Boston Bruins farm club in Johnstown, Pa. Mazzoni lasted 10 days in camp as a defenseman before being released.

Plymouth Canton has a transfer student who could make the Chiefs boys basketball team a team to contend with in the Western Lakes Activities Association. His name is Bryan Whittle, a 6-foot-5 junior forward who averaged 24 points and 12 rebounds per game last year in New York.

Catholic Central's hockey team has lost three expected returnees to junior hockey: senior forwards Bill Backi and Joe Blaznek and senior goalie Mike Brusseau. Best of luck goes to those three and to CC coach Jack Gumberton, who needs to find some replacements.

Madonna University finally has a first-class baseball field at Bentley High School in Livonia to go with the first-class program coach Mike George runs.

One of CC's football coaches, George Kuncic, lives on Coach Lane in... well, I won't say what city.

Falcons win with Miracle finish



Farmington High achieved its first football victory of the 1992 season Friday, but the Falcons needed a frantic-but-incredible finish to pull out a 15-9 win over host Livonia Churchill, which remains winless.

Farmington needed a Miracle finish to post its first football victory Friday night, and the Falcons happened to have one on their roster.

The Falcons recovered two onside kicks by Nathan Miracle, blocked a punt and threw two touchdown passes in the last two minutes to defeat host Livonia Churchill 15-9.

"It was a miracle win," Farmington coach Bernie Call said. "You just have to keep coaching and hoping things will end up right — and they finally did."

"I think this will get us over the hump. I think we'll play well in the last game (at Redford Union) and do

well the next two years."

The Falcons trailed 9-0 at halftime as turnovers kept them from sustaining any continuity on offense. Farmington fumbled nine times and lost five.

Darryl Cook's 17-yard run in the first quarter gave the Chargers (0-8) a 6-0 lead, and Bill Morris kicked a 22-yard field goal in the second period.

Farmington (1-7) finally scored when Mike Tokar threw a 12-yard pass to Stanley Lewis on fourth down with 3 1/2 minutes left in the game.

Miracle kicked the extra point. Aaron Cagnon recovered Miracle's first onside kick, but the Falcons were

forced to give up the ball with 1:51 remaining.

Farmington's defense held and Jon Economy blocked the Churchill punt with 29 seconds to play. On first down at the 28, Tokar threw a touchdown pass to Ken Johnson, who made a diving catch in the end zone with :21 on the clock, and then passed to Lewis for the two points.

"I told them 'If the quarterback gives you a pump take off deep, and Tokar did a nice job,'" Call said. "He saw that Johnson beat his man and put it up there."

"We'd been throwing these hitches the whole game, and we knew they were going to bite on that."

The Falcons recovered another Miracle onside kick and ran out the clock.

"The defense really helped because we played so badly in the first half,"

Call said. "We didn't feel so bad being down 9-0 at halftime."

"We said 'All we have to do is score one TD in each quarter and stop them on defense.' We hung in there and the defense kept them off the scoreboard until we could get something going."

"I just can't believe how one team can do so many things wrong, come back and do so many things right in the last two minutes."

Nigel Whitt rushed 14 times for 95 yards, Tokar nine for 45. Corby Lantry started the game at quarterback with a sprained ankle, and Farmington went with the more mobile Tokar in the second half. Tokar was 8-of-9 passing for 80 yards, and Lewis had seven catches for 65 yards.

Cook gained 90 yards on 22 carries for Churchill. The Chargers rushed for 186 yards and passed for 33, Farmington 161 and 108.

Hawks reach .500 with grid victory

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington Hills Harrison football team hopes the play of running backs Nick Williams and Scott Gurke was a glimpse of a promising future Saturday.

The two combined for 199 yards rushing and one touchdown apiece as the Hawks defeated visiting Walled Lake Central 14-0.

Williams, a sophomore upback who gained 112 yards on 13 carries, did the most damage with huge gains up the middle on the trap play. Gurke, a junior tailback, finished with 87 yards on 14 attempts.

"(The trap) was our biggest play, almost always with Steve Shaleb doing the trapping," Harrison coach John Herrington said. "The offensive line played one of its better games; we had some nice holes."

"Nick Williams looks like he's going to be a good one. We look forward to having him around for two more years."

The Hawks have a 3-4 record against all Western Lakes Activities Association teams and improved to 4-4 overall. The Vikings are 2-5 and 3-5. Harrison scored early in the game with a 2-yard run by Gurke, and the 7-0 lead stood through halftime.

The Vikings had plenty of opportunities, however. On three straight possessions, they reached the Harrison 8, 14 and 14, but lost the ball on a fumble and had two passes intercepted.

"That's probably the worst we've played all year," Central coach Darrell Harper said. "It's very disappointing to come this far and not play with enthusiasm or intensity."

"I guess the Harrison mystique scared them. If there was ever a year to beat Harrison, this was the year."

After losing the ball on the first interception, Paul Theriault picked off a Jeff Cisto pass on third down; however, Kevin Bryant intercepted in the end zone for Harrison two plays later. Dave Gleetzer recovered the fumble and Dave Hensel had the first interception for the Hawks.

"Our secondary did a great job," Herrington said. "Overall, they were a tough offense to defend because they have so many formations."

"I think we recognized them pretty well, and coach (Bob) Sutter put in quite a few blitzes because we felt we had to get to (quarterback Mike) Gluski. I thought we did a good job of rushing him, especially in the first half."

Harrison went from its own 20 to the Central 6 at the start of the third



JOHN STORMZAND/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Getting in swing: Brock Gove's 25-yard field-goal attempt in the fourth quarter Saturday was no good, but Harrison already had enough points for a 14-0 win over the Vikings.

quarter, but the drive stalled and an illegal-motion penalty wiped out a fake field-goal attempt on fourth down.

But the Hawks held and Marc Lesperance blocked a punt and recovered it at the Central 4. Williams scored from 3 yards on second down.

It was the first time Harper coached against Herrington, a longtime friend, though his former Southfield-Lathrup teams scrimmaged the Hawks every year.

"I waited 25 years for the challenge of playing them and didn't do it," he said. "We wanted to give them a ball game and we weren't there."

Harrison had 236 yards rushing and 27 passing. Cisto and Joe Pesci had a combined two-of-nine passing day. Gluski was seven of 21 for 87 yards with three interceptions. The Vikings were held to 30 net rushing yards.

Boss Varacalli also had an interception for Harrison, Eric Canfield and Theriault for Central. Tim Bares

and Charles Bambenek made nine tackles apiece for the Hawks.

In their final game Friday night, the Vikings play WLAA champion Walled Lake Western, and Harrison meets Warren DeLaSalle at Roseville Memorial Field. Kickoff is 7:30 p.m. for both games.

"If we play like today they'll annihilate us," Harper said. "They were outstanding against (Westland John) Glenn, so we had better play 100 percent better than today or not show up."

Shamrocks win district soccer title

BY C.J. BRISK
STAFF WRITER

There were a few things favoring Redford Catholic Central in Friday's Class A district soccer final against Livonia Stevenson at Southfield.

The Shamrocks were bigger. They were more physical. And they wanted it more.

Those are three pretty good reasons why CC won, 1-0, eliminating the defending state champions and putting the Shamrocks into tonight's regional against the Ann Arbor Huron-Ann Arbor Pioneer winner at Plymouth Salem.

Stevenson coach Walt Barrett elaborated on the causes of his team's ouster. "They dominated the game," said Barrett. "Catholic Central flat out played a better game today. We just had a bad game, and we picked a bad time to do it."

"But (CC) definitely earned it."

Indeed, it was strange seeing a team from Ste-

venson, the school that for so long dominated high school soccer throughout the state, be dominated. But CC did just that.

The Spartans (10-4-4 final record) are less experienced. It's true (13 of their 25 roster players are freshmen or sophomores; CC has 23 juniors and seniors, and just two sophomores).

The Shamrocks (now 14-2-2) turned their age into a sizeable advantage, outmuscling Stevenson for most balls. Further hampering the Spartans was the loss of senior keeper Steve Weller, who suffered a fractured hand while warming up for the game. Freshman Jim Grewe replaced him.

Still, the game was scoreless until the second half. CC finally got on the scoreboard on a corner kick, thanks to a breakdown in Stevenson's defensive coverage.

"We thought there were some gaps there we could take advantage of," said CC coach Phil La-

Joy. "We thought we had an advantage on the corner kicks."

They did. Rich Walos lined up the corner seven minutes into the second half. He drilled the ball to the near post, where senior forward Anthony Verrino met it — unopposed — for the scoring header.

Nobody was around Verrino. No one was marking him.

After that, it was just a matter of keeping Stevenson at bay. That wasn't too difficult until, in the late game, Barrett shuffled his lineup, pushing seniors Jeff Thomas and Adam Pichler up front. The Spartans' pressure increased, but CC came close to doubling its advantage on several occasions, too.

"Their defense held us out of their end," said Barrett. "We didn't get any offense going until I moved Thomas and Pichler up."

But there wasn't time enough to alter the outcome.